

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

SS-20 USIA-15 NEA-10 DRC-01 /132 W

----- 025586

R 051215Z JAN 74

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4094

INFO USINT ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY RABAT

C O N F I D E N T I A L TUNIS 0054

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, TS, MO

SUBJECT: BOURGUIBA MENDING RELATIONS WITH MOROCCO

1. ON JANUARY 2 PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA RECEIVED MIN INTERIOR
TAHAR BELKHODJA FOLLOWING LATTER'S SECOND VISIT TO MOROCCO
(DEC 28 - JAN 1). PM NOUIRA AND HABIB BOURGUIBA, JR.,
PRESIDENT OF DEVELOPMENT BANK, ALSO PRESENT. LOCAL
PRESS REPORTS BELKHODJA PRESENTED REPORT ON HIS MISSION
AND TRANSMITTED LETTER FROM HASSAN II TO BOURGUIBA. HE
TOLD PRESS BOURGUIBA WAS TOUCHED BY SENTIMENTS OF RESPECT
THAT HASSAN II HAS SHOWN FROM HIM AND GAVE ORDERS FOR
"ACTIVATING" TUNISIAN-MOROCCAN RELATIONS IN ALL FIELDS.

2. FONMIN MASMOUDI DURING LONG CONVERSATION JAN 4.
(REPORTED SEPTELS) TOLD ME TUNISIA'S DISPUTE WITH
MOROCCO, WHICH LARGELY PERSONAL MISUNDERSTANDING
BETWEEN BOURGUIBA AND HASSAN II, NOW HAS BEEN PATCHED
UP FOLLOWING VISIT OF BELKHODJA. HE SAID TUNISIA WILL
BE SENDING BECHIR M'HEDHEBI AS NEW AMBASSADOR TO RABAT.
M'HEDHEBI, WHO NOW AMBASSADOR TO LONDON, HAS HAD
CONSIDERABLE EXPERIENCE IN MIDDLE EAST AND IS ABLE DIPLOMAT.

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3. COMMENT: WHILE REASON FOR BOURGUIBA'S DECISION TO

MEND FENCES WITH HASSAN II NOT KNOWN, THE OPPORTUNITY
FOR IT OBVIOUSLY WAS KILLING OF MOROCCAN MINISTERS IN ROME--
AT WHICH POINT BELKHODJA WAS DISPATCHED AS EMISSARY TO CONVEY
CONDOLENCES. BOURGUIBA MAY HAVE WANTED TO ASSURE HASSAN
THAT DESPITE THEIR PAST DIFFERENCES TUNISIA IN NO WAY
INVOLVED OR AWARE OF PLANNED ATTACK ON PAN AM PLANE.
FACT THAT BELKHODJA RETURNED TO MOROCCO SECOND TIME
SUGGESTS THAT FIRST VISIT OPENED WAY TO RECONCILIATION,
PERHAPS AT HASSAN'S INITIATIVE.

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